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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/13/2016  
TAGS: PGOV PINS PHUM SNAR KDEM GY

SUBJECT: JAGDEO TAKING CAMPAIGN TO LOW ROAD: ELECTION  
PREVIEW #5

REF: GEORGETOWN 205

Classified By: Ambassador Roland W. Bullen  
For reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

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Jagdeo asks ABC Representatives how Election is Shaping Up  
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¶1. (C) President Jagdeo summoned Ambassador as well as the British and Canadian High Commissioners to his home on short notice Saturday March 4. Jagdeo wanted to discuss the elections and security. He said that he has started his campaign. (Note: Jagdeo has not yet been officially designated the PPP's presidential candidate.) He then surprised his guests by asking them how election preparations are going. Ambassador and the High Commissioners replied that the Joint International Technical Assessor (JITA), whose reports are shared with the GoG, has said technical preparations are proceeding well despite some slippage in a few areas.

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Jagdeo already Slinging Mud at Opposition  
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¶2. (U) Jagdeo used a March 5 address at Babu John commemorating the death of former President and PPP leader Cheddi Jagan as a platform to score political points with core Indo-Guyanese supporters. Jagdeo exhorted the audience to vote for the PPP because "I want you to know that the same people who have to steal guns now would be given te guns if the government changes". Jagdeo was rferring to the recent theft of thirty-three AK-4s and five Baretta auto-pistols from a Guyana Deense Force (GDF) storehouse (reftel). Jagdeo reportedly went on that "the opposition forces" have o answer to the people "as to why they allow their friends, their bandit friends to take over those people's villages and rob innocent civilians." He did not offer any actual evidence to support the accusation that opposition forces are responsible for the weapons theft and the Agricola/Eccles assault.

¶3. (C) PolOff met with Alliance For Change (AFC) leader Khemraj Ramjattan February 22. The AFC is a new party launched in October 2005 by former members of the ruling PPP and opposition PNC and WPA parties. Ramjattan is a former PPP Central Committee member and there is no love lost between him and Jagdeo. Ramjattan told PolOff that Jagdeo is playing the race card repeatedly when meeting with

Indo-Guyanese constituents. Ramjattan said that Jagdeo warns them not to vote for the AFC because its Presidential candidate, Raphael Trotman, is Afro-Guyanese.

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GoG Sues Media Firm for Airing Comments on PPP/Drugs Link  
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¶4. (U) The Office of the President (OP) initiated legal action March 10 against Vieira Communications Limited (VCL), owner of an independent television station. VCL's news program carried comments by opposition PNC leader Robert Corbin linking drug traffickers to the PPP administration -- comments that OP contends are libelous and unfounded. However, Corbin's comments merely echo statements that appear in the 2006 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR).

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Comment  
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¶5. (C) Jagdeo's intent is transparent -- to arouse the public's fear and leverage that into votes. His distrust of the GDF, often expressed in private, is now bubbling to the surface. The VCL lawsuit would seem frivolous at any time, but coming just five days after Jagdeo's slanderous remarks at Babu John it is crudely hypocritical. Ramjattan's assertion that Jagdeo is pursuing a racist, divisive line in private campaign sessions seems very credible. The PPP feels vulnerable that they may not win an outright majority in the upcoming election and will play hardball to avoid this result. Unfortunately, this approach can only reinforce Guyana's vicious political cycle of mutual recrimination between the PPP and PNC and racially-oriented election violence. END COMMENT.

BULLEN